

FAR FROM ODYSSEY...

WHISTLES

IT'S REALLY
COMING DOWN,
ISN'T IT!



I'M GLAD THIS
WEATHER HELD OFF
WHILE WE WERE AT
CEDAR POINT.

AYE,
2 FULL DAYS
OF SUNSHINE.

COULDN'T
HAVE RIDDEN
ANY OF THE
ROLLERCOASTERS
IN A STORM.

THANKS
AGAIN FOR
TAKING US,
WHIT.

IT'S THE LEAST
I COULD DO FOR
MY FAVORITE
EMPLOYEES!

WE'RE
YOUR **ONLY**
EMPLOYEES.



UH OH!

*THAT DOESN'T
SOUND GOOD!*

POP!
SPUTTER!
STEEEEEEAM...

if5000075



I'D BETTER
TURN OFF
HERE...

A FEW MILES OF DESERTED
BACK ROADS LATER...



SPOOKY...

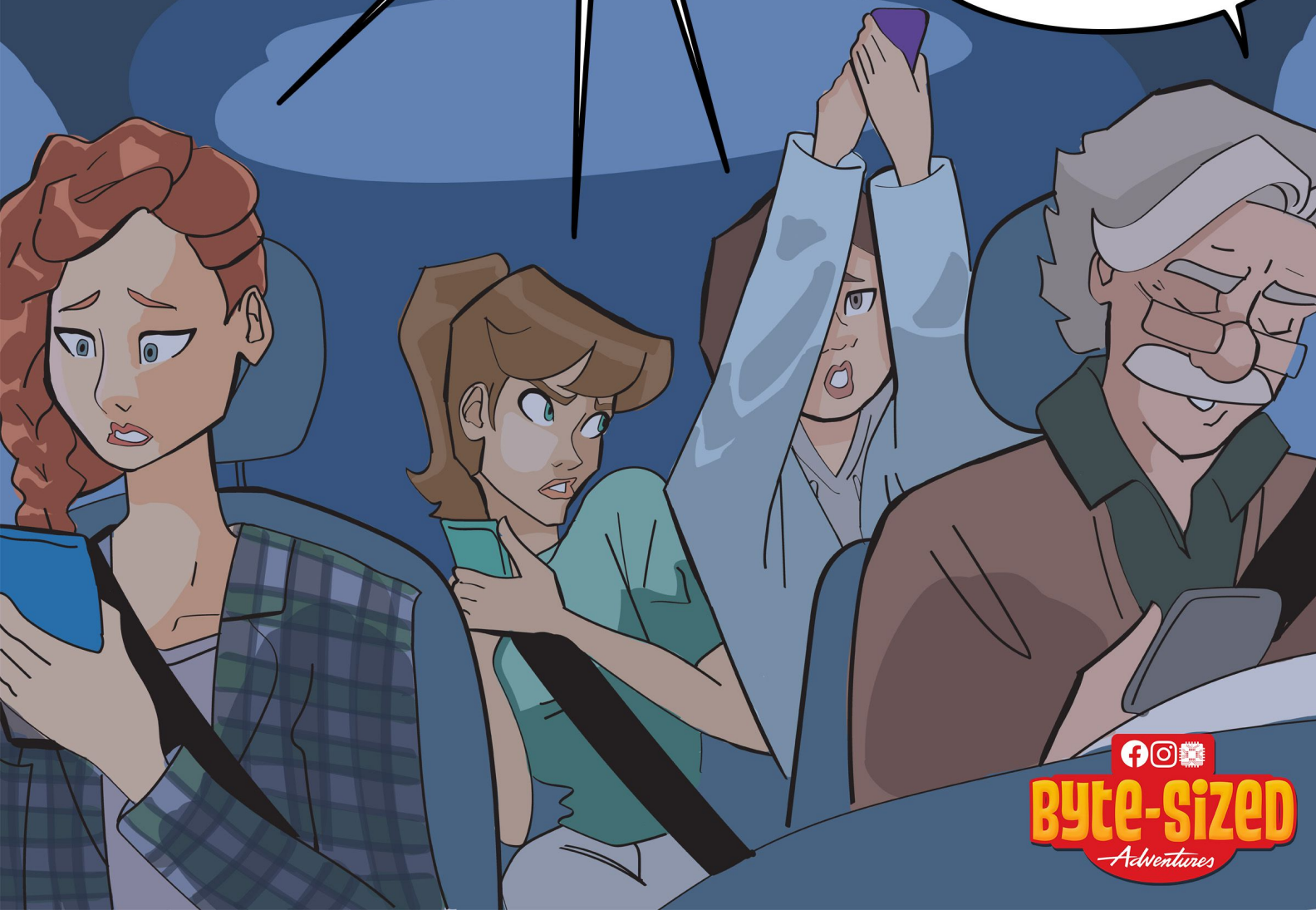
HMMM...
NO SERVICE.

DO ANY
OF YOU HAVE
RECEPTION?

NOPE.

WELL, I DON'T
HAVE ANY TOOLS
WITH ME, AND WE
CAN'T SIT HERE
ALL NIGHT.

THEY SHOULD
HAVE A PHONE
INSIDE...



UM... MR.
WHITTAKER,

THIS PLACE
IS **KINDA** GIVIN' ME
THE CREEPS.

IT'S...

JUST THE
WEATHER.

MAKES
EVERYTHING
SEEM SCARIER
THAN IT IS.

WELL YOU
ALL CAN WAIT
HERE FOR ME
IF YOU WANT.

THUNDER!!!

UGH.

TWENTY FEET
FROM THE CAR TO
THE PORCH AND
I'M SOAKED!

SAME.

I'M TELLING
YOU GUYS, I'VE
SEEN A BUNCH OF
SCARY MOVIES
THAT START OUT
JUST LIKE THIS.

SO SORRY,
WE DON'T **HAVE**
MOVIES HERE...

--OR
TELEVISIONS
FOR THAT
MATTER.

IT'S AN OLD
HOTEL, BUT I
ASSURE YOU WE
HAVE EVERY OTHER
CONSIDERATION
FOR YOUR
COMFORT...



**CREEPY
BUTLER!**

THIS IS
A MOVIE!

HE'S THE
CONCIERGE,
JULES. BUT...

BUT AYE...

I'VE SEEN MORE
PLEASANT SMILES
ON **SKELETONS...**

HELLO.
I WONDER IF WE
COULD USE YOUR
PHONE. OUR CAR'S
BROKEN DOWN AND
WE DON'T HAVE
CELL RECEPTION.

BUT OF
COURSE. THE
TELEPHONE IS
RIGHT THIS
WAY...

SIGH

I'M SORRY, GIRLS.
THEY CAN'T SEND
SOMEONE OUT UNTIL
THE MORNING
BECAUSE OF THE
STORM.

LOOKS LIKE
WE'LL NEED TO
STAY THE
NIGHT.

SPLENDID.

I CAN CHECK
YOU IN RIGHT
OVER HERE.

YEAH...

SPLENDID...

RIGHT
THIS WAY.

I'VE SET YOU
UP IN TWO OF
OUR FINEST
ROOMS.

IT'S BEEN
QUITE A WHILE
SINCE WE'VE
HAD GUESTS.

BUT WE
KEEP THE
ROOMS FRESH
AND CLEAN.

YOU KNOW...

JUST IN CASE...

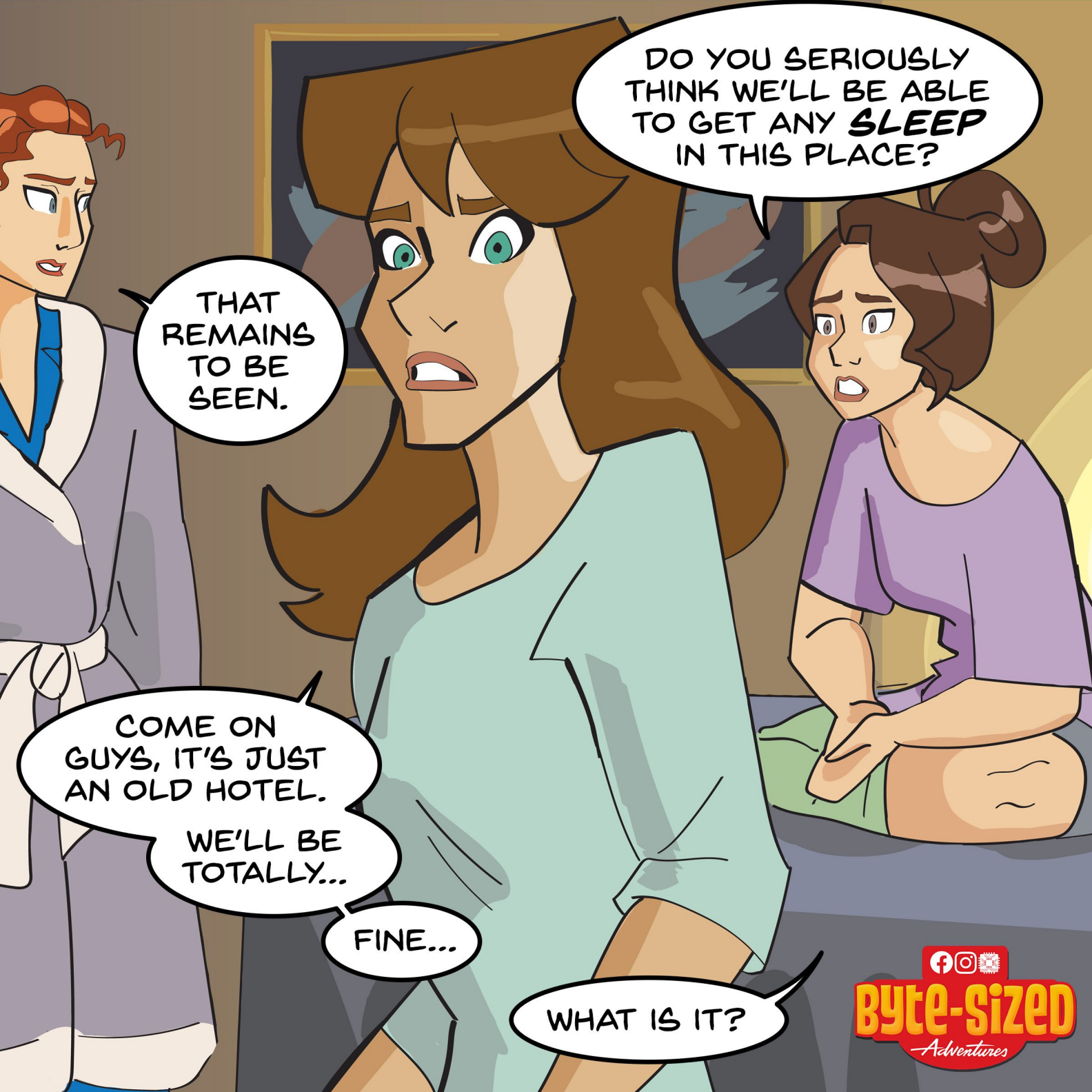


THANK YOU
AGAIN FOR YOUR
HOSPITALITY.

YEAH, UH,
THANKS.

MY **ABSOLUTE**
PLEASURE.

WE HOPE YOU HAVE A
PLEASANT NIGHT'S
SLUMBER.



DO YOU SERIOUSLY
THINK WE'LL BE ABLE
TO GET ANY **SLEEP**
IN THIS PLACE?

THAT
REMAINS
TO BE
SEEN.

COME ON
GUYS, IT'S JUST
AN OLD HOTEL.

WE'LL BE
TOTALLY...

FINE...

WHAT IS IT?

WELL, *THAT'S*
A WEIRD CHOICE
FOR WALL ART.

"BANK ROBBING DUO
TERRORIZES AREA. YOUNG
WOMAN DISAPPEARS AFTER
BEING TAKEN HOSTAGE IN
ROBBERY GONE WRONG."



WHY WOULD
THEY FRAME AN
ARTICLE ABOUT A
BANK ROBBERY?

THIS IS A LOCAL
PAPER. IT MUST'VE
HAPPENED AROUND
HERE.

IS IT JUST ME OR DOES THE MUGSHOT OF THAT
BANK ROBBER LOOK LIKE A YOUNG VERSION OF...

YOU THINK THE
CONCIERGE IS
THE BANK
ROBBER?

SEE!
YOU KNEW
WHAT I WAS
GONNA SAY! YOU
THINK SO
TOO!

I **DIDN'T**
SAY THAT!





BUT LOOK AT THE
PHOTO OF THE GIRL
WHO WENT MISSING...

WHAT
ABOUT IT?

SHE LOOKS
JUST LIKE
THE GIRL IN A
PAINTING I
SAW DOWN
THE HALL...

OKAY, I'VE GOT
GOOSEBUMPS
THE SIZE OF
MARBLES.

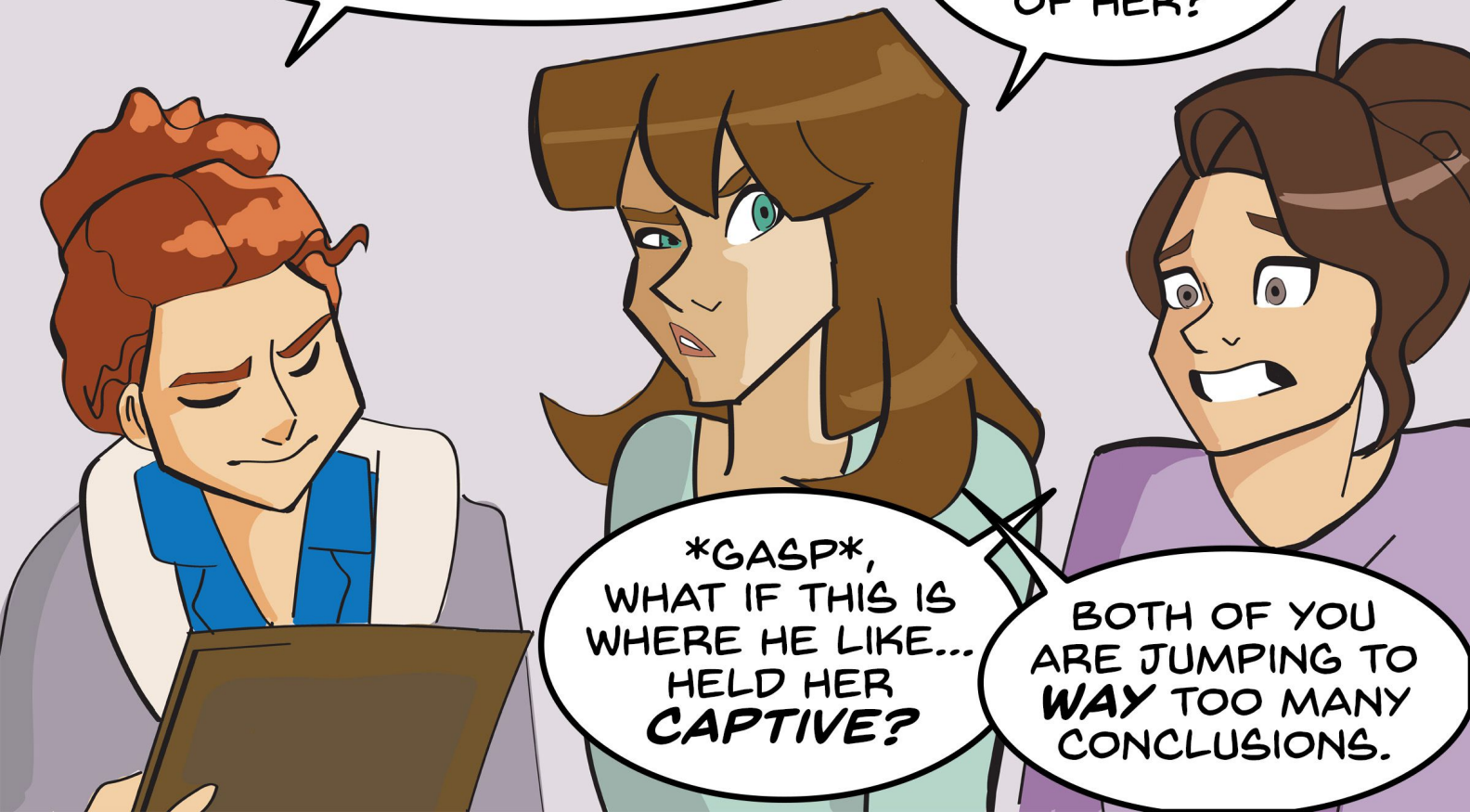
SO YOU
THINK THE CONCIERGE
DOWNSTAIRS IS A
FORMER BANK ROBBER
WHO MADE THE GIRL IN
THE **PAINTING**
DISAPPEAR?

HE KEPT THIS NEWSPAPER FOR
A REASON, AND THAT PAINTING
IS THE SPITTIN' IMAGE OF THE
GIRL FROM THE ARTICLE.

WHY WOULD
HE HAVE A
PAINTING
OF HER?

***GASP*,**
WHAT IF THIS IS
WHERE HE LIKE...
HELD HER
CAPTIVE?

BOTH OF YOU
ARE JUMPING TO
WAY TOO MANY
CONCLUSIONS.



CREAK



AND THAT'S
WHEN WE CAME
OVER HERE!

HMM...
I'LL ADMIT, THERE *IS* A
SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE
GIRL IN THE ARTICLE AND
THE GIRL IN THE PAINTING.

NOT TO MENTION THAT
ARTICLE WAS FRAMED--
LIKE IT HAD SPECIAL
SIGNIFICANCE.

SO WE NEED
TO GET **OUT** OF
HERE, RIGHT!?

NOT UNLESS YOU
WANT TO **WALK**
BACK TO ODYSSEY
IN THIS STORM.

BUT--

IF IT BOTHERS YOU,
WHY DON'T WE JUST
GO DOWNSTAIRS AND
ASK THE CONCIERGE
ABOUT IT.

HE SEEMED VERY EXCITED
TO TALK TO GUESTS.

HE
CREEPS
ME OUT!

I'M NOT
GOING DOWN
THERE.

WHEN I
SPOKE WITH
HIM, I
DIDN'T
SENSE
ANYTHING
MENACING.

WHIT'S RIGHT,
YOU GUYS...
IT'S *JUST* A
NEWSPAPER
CLIPPING.

LET'S JUST GIVE THE
CONCIERGE THE BENEFIT OF
THE DOUBT. WE CAN ASK HIM
ABOUT IT IN THE MORNING
WHEN THE SUN'S UP.

TRY AND
GET SOME
SLEEP.

GO AHEAD AND
DEADBOLT YOUR DOOR.
I'M RIGHT ACROSS THE
HALL IF YOU NEED ME.

THANKS
WHIT.

THANK YOU,
MR. WHITTAKER.
GOODNIGHT.

NIGHT.



WELL, I'M
LOCKING IT, **AND**
BARRICADING IT.

FINE
WITH ME.

THE
CONCIERGE
SEEMS
PRETTY
FRAIL.

EVEN IF HE **WAS** A
BANK ROBBER YEARS
AGO, HE WOULDN'T BE
ABLE TO BREAK DOWN
A DOOR **NOW**.

IT'S THE
KIDNAPPING
PART THAT
WORRIES ME.

I
AGREE.

CLOSER TO BEDTIME





BEDTIME

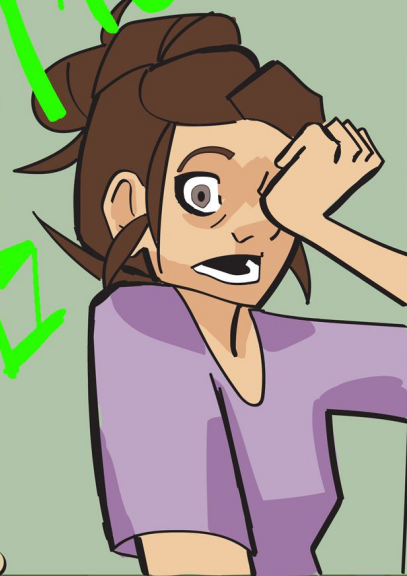
MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

WE HOPE YOU
NEVER WANT TO
LEAVE



MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

WE HOPE YOU
NEVER WANT TO
LEAVE



WHAT IS IT!?

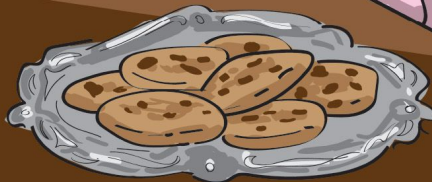
DID EITHER
OF YOU WRITE
SOMETHING ON
THE BATHROOM
MIRROR?!

WHAT!?

WHY WOULD
ANYONE DO
THAT?

AND **WHERE**
DID THIS PLATE
OF COOKIES
COME FROM!?

THIS WASN'T
HERE BEFORE!



IT LOOKS LIKE THIS IS JUST DRY-ERASE MARKER. THE HUMIDITY IN THE BATHROOM PROBABLY MADE IT DRIP.

GREAT!
I FEEL **SO**
MUCH BETTER!

SURE, SOMEONE **SNUCK** INTO OUR ROOM THROUGH A **BARRICADED DOOR** WHILE WE **SLEPT--**

--BUT AT **LEAST** THEY WERE ONLY WIELDING A DRY-ERASE MARKER!

**KNOCK
KNOCK**

AH!!!

CONNIE?
IT'S WHIT!

I HEARD
SCREAMS, ARE YOU
THREE ALRIGHT IN
THERE?

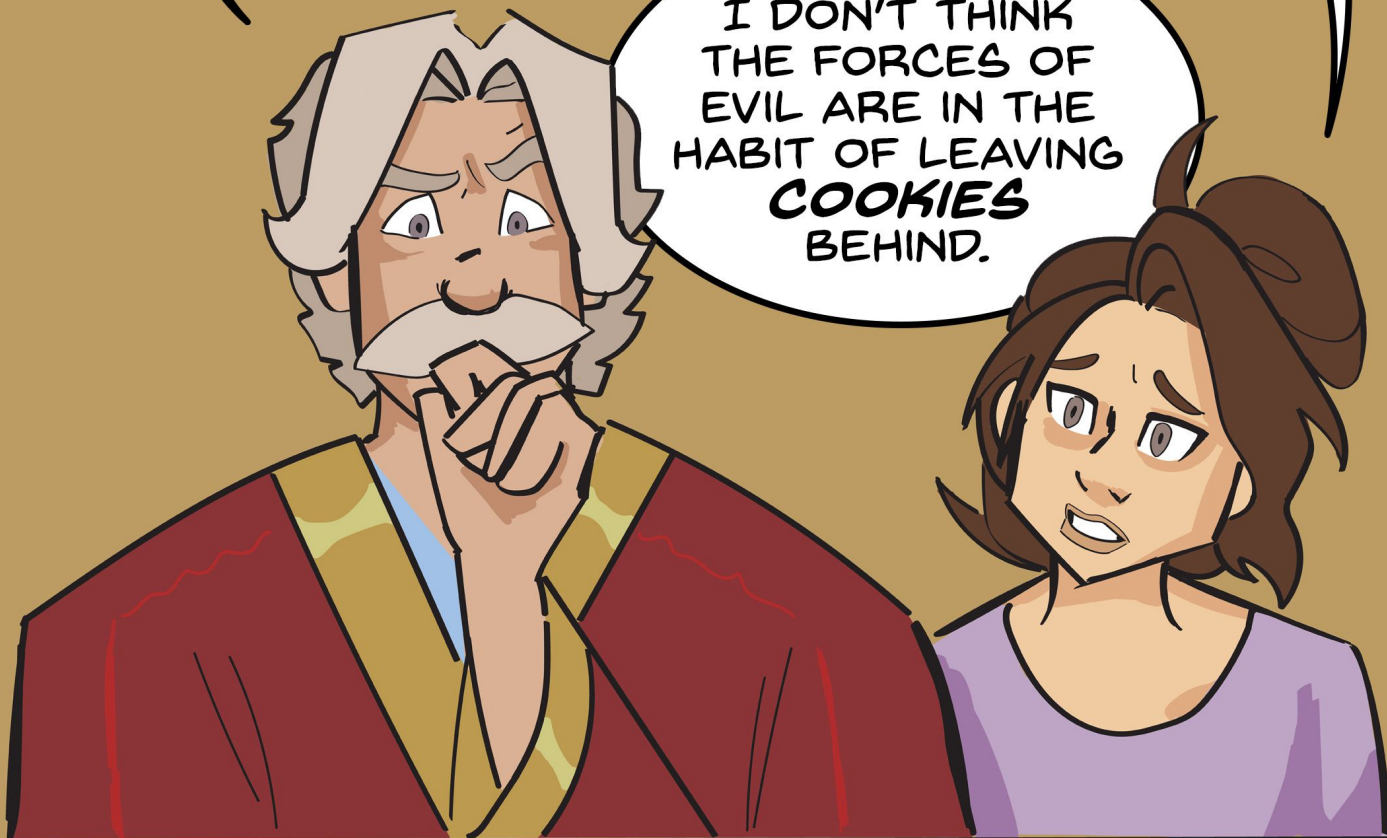


IT LOOKS LIKE
SOMETHING STRANGE
IS GOING ON HERE.

I HAVE THE
SAME THINGS
IN **MY** ROOM.

THIS IS BEYOND
STRANGE,
MR. WHITTAKER--
THIS IS STRAIGHT
UP EVIL HAUNTED
HOUSE STUFF.

I DON'T THINK
THE FORCES OF
EVIL ARE IN THE
HABIT OF LEAVING
COOKIES
BEHIND.



THAT STILL
DOESN'T EXPLAIN
HOW THE COOKIES
GOT THERE!

NO...
IT DOESN'T.

I BARRICADED
THE DOOR! THERE'S
NO **WAY** ANYONE
COULD'VE GOTTEN IN!

AGAIN...
I THINK THERE'S
ONLY THE **ONE**
EMPLOYEE...

YOU MEAN THE
FORMER **BANK**
ROBBER?

YOU
DON'T
KNOW
THAT.

WAS THE BARRICADE STILL IN THE **SAME** SPOT WHEN YOU LET WHIT IN?

ARE YOU SUGGESTING HE **MOVED** THE BARRICADE FROM OUTSIDE, WITHOUT US HEARING?

AND WHAT ABOUT THE DEADBOLT?

AYE, I WOULDN'T THINK A MAN **HIS AGE** COULD FORCE OPEN A DEADBOLTED DOOR.

AHEM

...THOUGH I WOULDN'T WANT TO **ASSUME**.

THERE'S A **SIMPLE** SOLUTION TO ALL THIS **GUESSING**.

WHAT'S THAT?

LIKE I SAID BEFORE,

WE GO DOWNSTAIRS RIGHT NOW, AND **ASK** HIM ABOUT IT.



THERE'S
NO ONE
HERE...

TYPICALLY A
CONCIERGE STAYS UP
ALL NIGHT AND
MANS THE DESK...

HMMM,
WELL IF IT *IS*
JUST HIM
RUNNING THE
ESTABLISHMENT,
HE MAY HAVE
GONE TO
SLEEP.

WE **FRAIL**
OLD MEN
NEED OUR
REST, YOU
KNOW.

SORRY...

ALRIGHT GIRLS, I CAN'T EXPLAIN THE COOKIES OR WRITING IN OUR ROOMS, BUT IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND WE HAVE NOWHERE TO GO. LET'S ALL HEAD BACK UPSTAIRS.

BUT--

I'LL BE **MORE** THAN HAPPY TO LEAVE MY DOOR OPEN AND KEEP WATCH IF YOU LIKE.

THAT'S OKAY, MR. WHITTAKER. WE'LL BE ALRIGHT.

WE WILL!?

WE WILL.

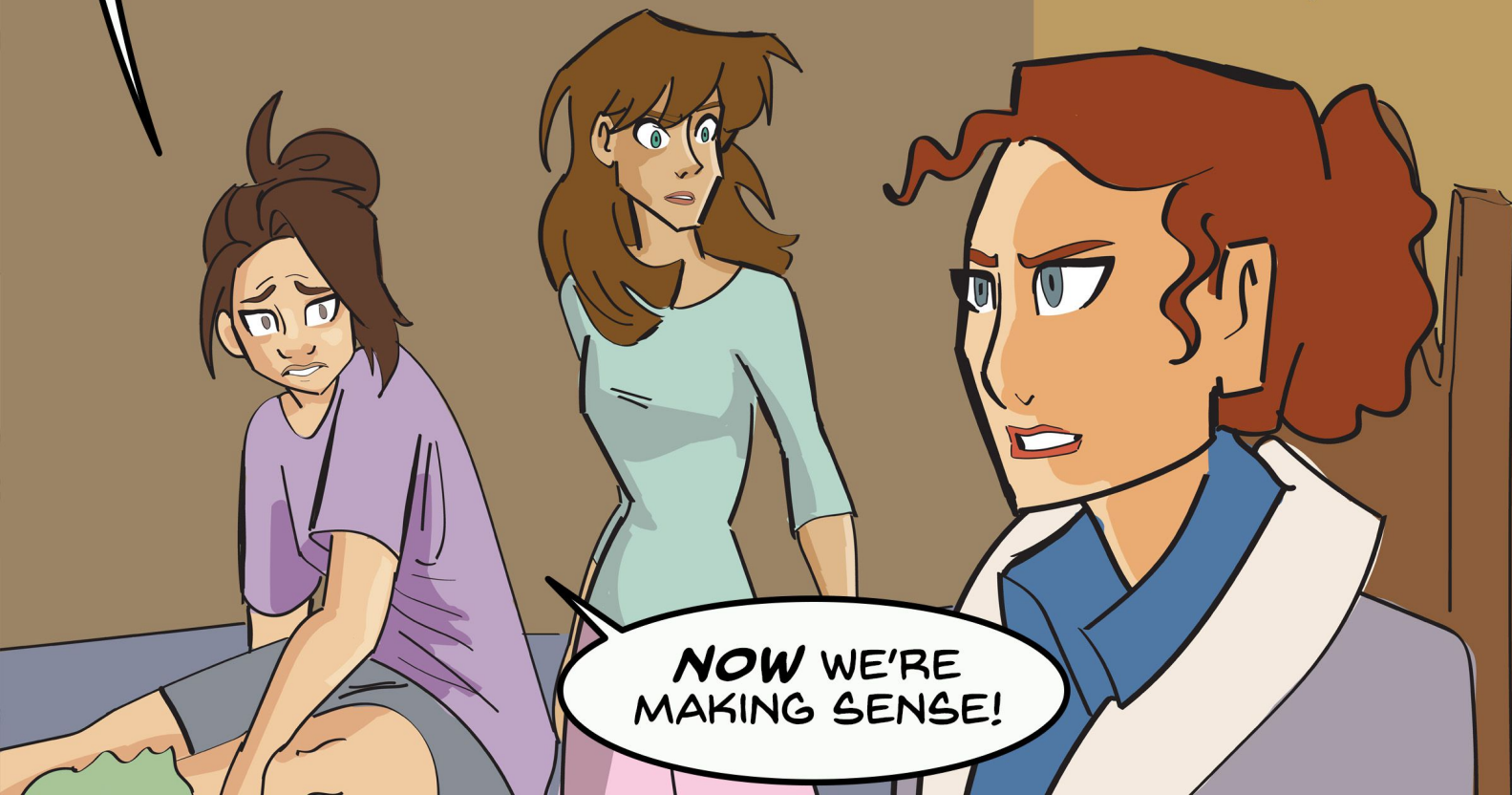
I AM
WAY TOO
CREEPED
OUT TO GO
TO SLEEP!

THIS IS JUST LIKE
"SLEEPLESS NIGHT IV."
WE'RE GONNA WAKE UP
WITH NO BIG TOES.

I'M NOT
EVEN
PLANNING
TO SLEEP.

YOU'RE
STAYING UP?
I THOUGHT
YOU SAID
WE'D BE
FINE.

WE **WILL** BE,
BECAUSE I'M GOING
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S
GOING ON.



NOW WE'RE
MAKING SENSE!

I **REALLY**
THINK WE SHOULD
STAY IN OUR ROOM.
TOGETHER. ALL
THREE OF US.

IF YOU
DON'T WANT
TO BE ALONE,
CONNIE, JUST
COME WITH
US.

WHAT
DO YOU GUYS
THINK YOU'RE
GOING TO **FIND**
ANYWAY?

AN
EXPLANATION.

YEAH! OF EXACTLY
HOW AND **WHY** THE GHOST OF THAT
HOSTAGE GIRL IS BACK FOR REVENGE
ON HER BANK-ROBBING KIDNAPPER.

A
GHOST, JULES?
REALLY?

DO YOU
HAVE A **BETTER**
EXPLANATION?

I SAY
WE GO **FIND**
THAT BETTER
EXPLANATION.

BACK IN THE LOBBY

OKAY, LET'S
SEE WHAT THIS
GUY'S UP TO!

JULES!
GET **OUT**
FROM BEHIND
THE COUNTER!

AYE,
WE CAN FIND AN
ANSWER **WITHOUT**
BREAKING THE LAW.

WHAT
LAW?

THERE'S NO SIGN SAYING NOT TO
COME BACK HERE, AND I'M NOT
OPENING THE CASH REGISTER.

THERE MIGHT
BE CONFIDENTIAL
DOCUMENTS OR
SOMETHING
BACK THERE.

GUYS,
CHECK IT
OUT!

THE OL' SAFE
BEHIND A PAINTING
TRICK.

CLASSIC.

WHIT'S GOT
ONE OF THESE IN
HIS OFFICE.

IF I WAS HIDING SOMETHING
VALUABLE, *LIKE EVIDENCE OF
MY CRIMES*, I'D PUT IT IN HERE.

WELL I'M PRETTY SURE
BREAKING INTO A SAFE
IS, *IN FACT*, ILLEGAL. SO
I'LL SAY IT AGAIN,

**GET OUT
FROM BEHIND
THE COUNTER!**



AH, BUT IS IT
"BREAKING IN" IF
IT'S ALREADY
OPEN?

IT'S NOT
YOUR
SAFE!

I'M NOT
TAKING ANYTHING,
I'M JUST
LOOKING!

JULES,
GET AWAY FROM
THAT SAFE RIGHT--

OPEN!

IS THAT A
RING?

IT'S--
ENGRAVED WITH THE
SAME NAME AS THE GIRL
WHO **DISAPPEARED!**





OKAY...
THAT'S A
LITTLE...

FREAKY
IS WHAT IT IS!

YEAH I ADMIT
IT, THAT'S THE
RIGHT WORD.

YES, YES, YES.
I THINK IT'S TIME
TO GO.

WE NEED TO WAKE UP MR. WHITTAKER AND CALL THE COPS!

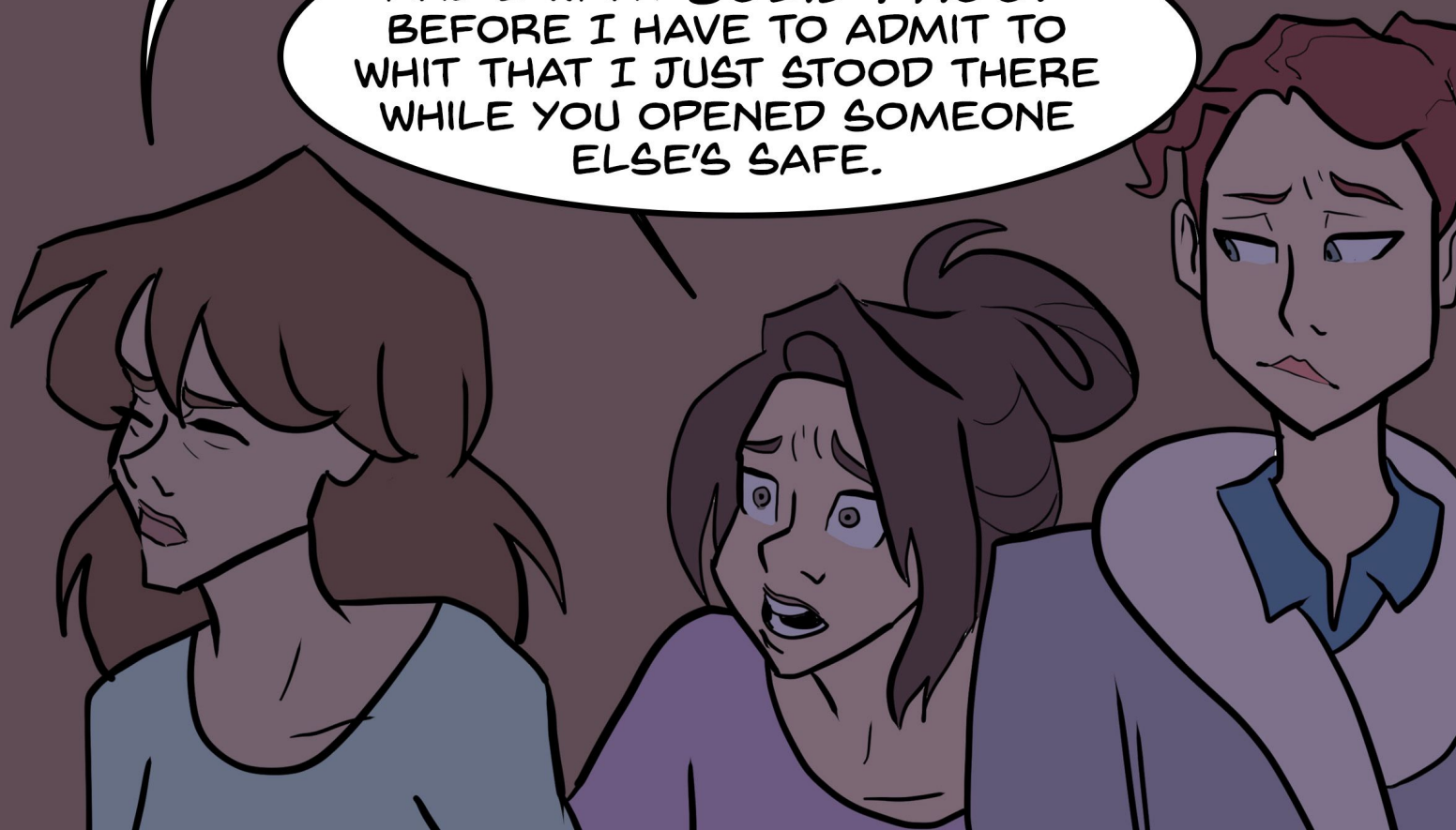
THE CONCIERGE *IS* A BANK ROBBER AND HOSTAGE TAKER!

WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO TROUBLE THE POLICE *OR* WHIT.

WHAT!?

RENEE'S RIGHT. EVERYTHING WE FOUND *IS* STRANGE, BUT NONE OF IT PROVES ANYTHING.

AND I WANT *SOLID PROOF* BEFORE I HAVE TO ADMIT TO WHIT THAT I JUST STOOD THERE WHILE YOU OPENED SOMEONE ELSE'S SAFE.



CREAK



DIDN'T IT
SOUND LIKE IT WAS
COMING FROM THIS
WALL?

YEAH, FROM
INSIDE IT!

OKAY,
THAT'S ENOUGH,
LET'S HEAD
BACK--

LOOK,
A LOOSE
PANEL!

A **DARK**
ONE...

WHIT HAS
ONE OF **THESE**
TOO...

A SECRET
PASSAGE!

WE'RE
GOING IN.

IT LOOKS LIKE
THERE'S A DOOR
UP AHEAD.



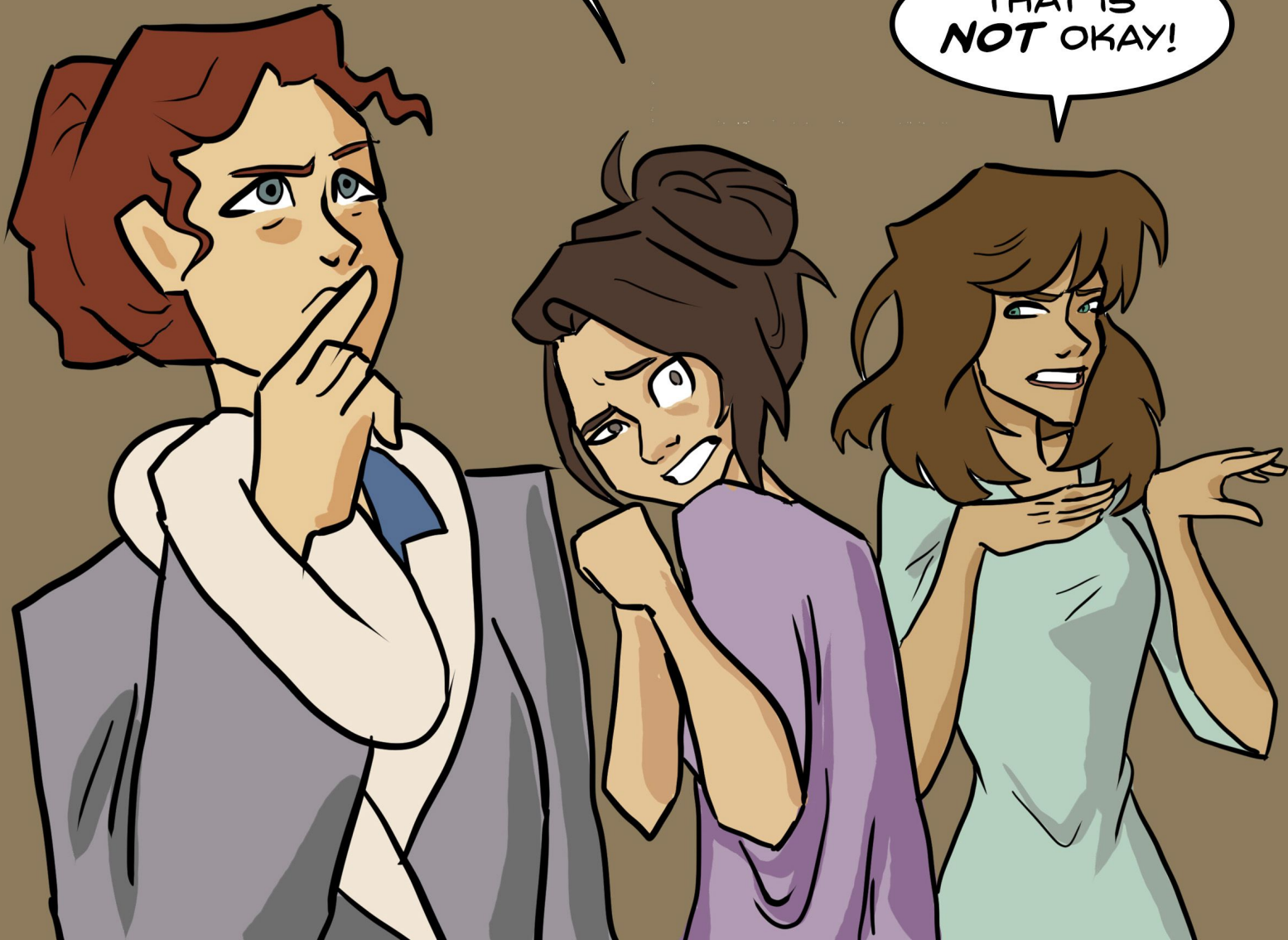
IT'S OUR
ROOM!



SO SOMEONE
DID SNEAK INTO
OUR ROOM!

RIGHT. **SOMEONE.**
NOT A GHOST.

THAT IS
NOT OKAY!



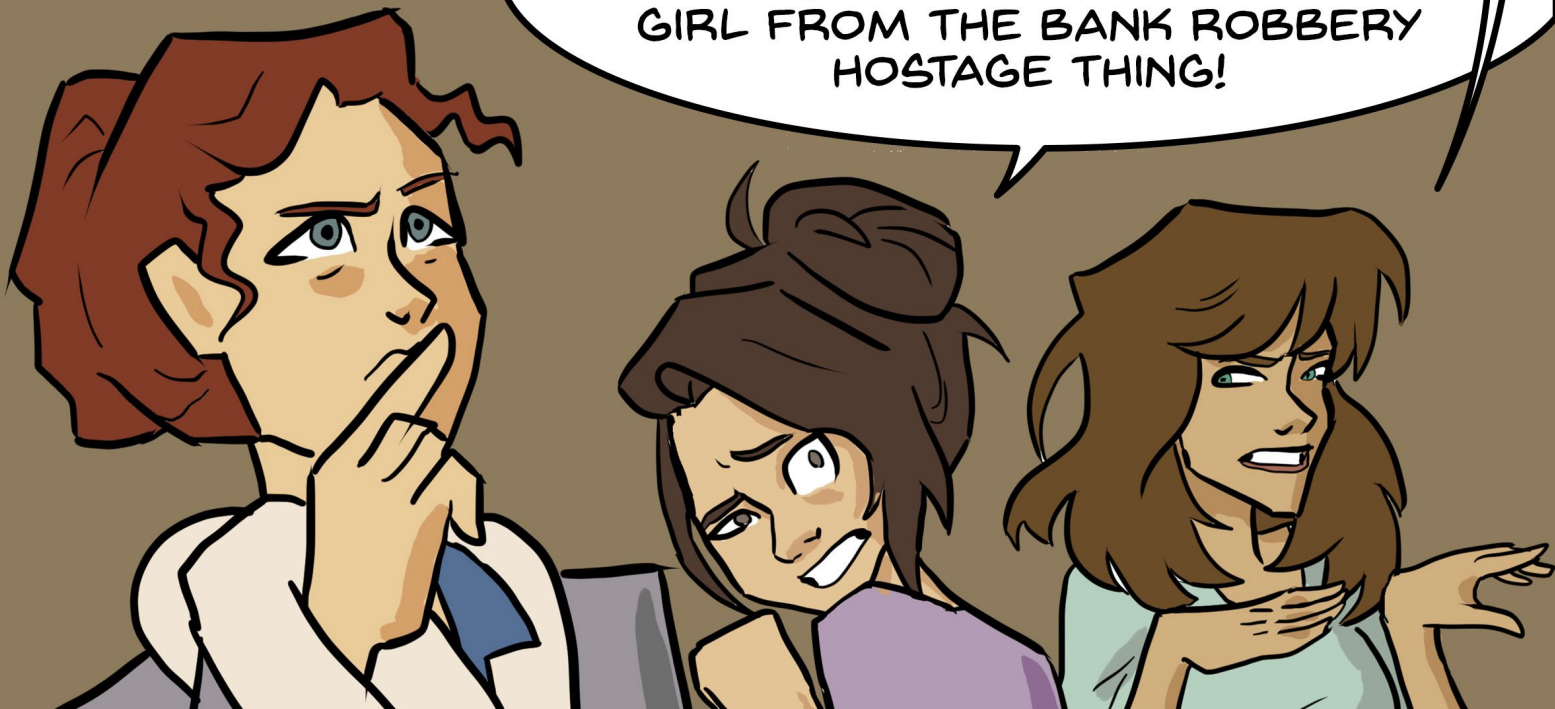
BUT WHY WOULD
SOMEONE SNEAK
INTO OUR ROOM TO
LEAVE COOKIES?

IS THIS THAT
CONCIERGE'S
WEIRD IDEA OF
HOSPITALITY?!

THERE'S NO WAY SOMEONE IN THEIR RIGHT
MIND WOULD THINK IT'S OKAY TO SNEAK INTO
A GUEST'S ROOM WHILE THEY SLEPT!

PERHAPS HE'S **NOT**
IN HIS RIGHT MIND?

AND NONE OF THIS EXPLAINS
THE NEWSPAPER, THE PAINTING, OR
THE RING, WHICH ALL POINT TO THAT
GIRL FROM THE BANK ROBBERY
HOSTAGE THING!





CREAK

AAAH!

BUT THIS TIME
WE KNOW WHERE
IT'S COMIN' FROM!
COME ON!

IT'S THAT
NOISE AGAIN!

KEEP GOING!

THERE'S
SOMETHIN'
MOVIN' UP
AHEAD!

THERE'S
DEFINITELY
SOMETHING
RUNNING FROM
US!



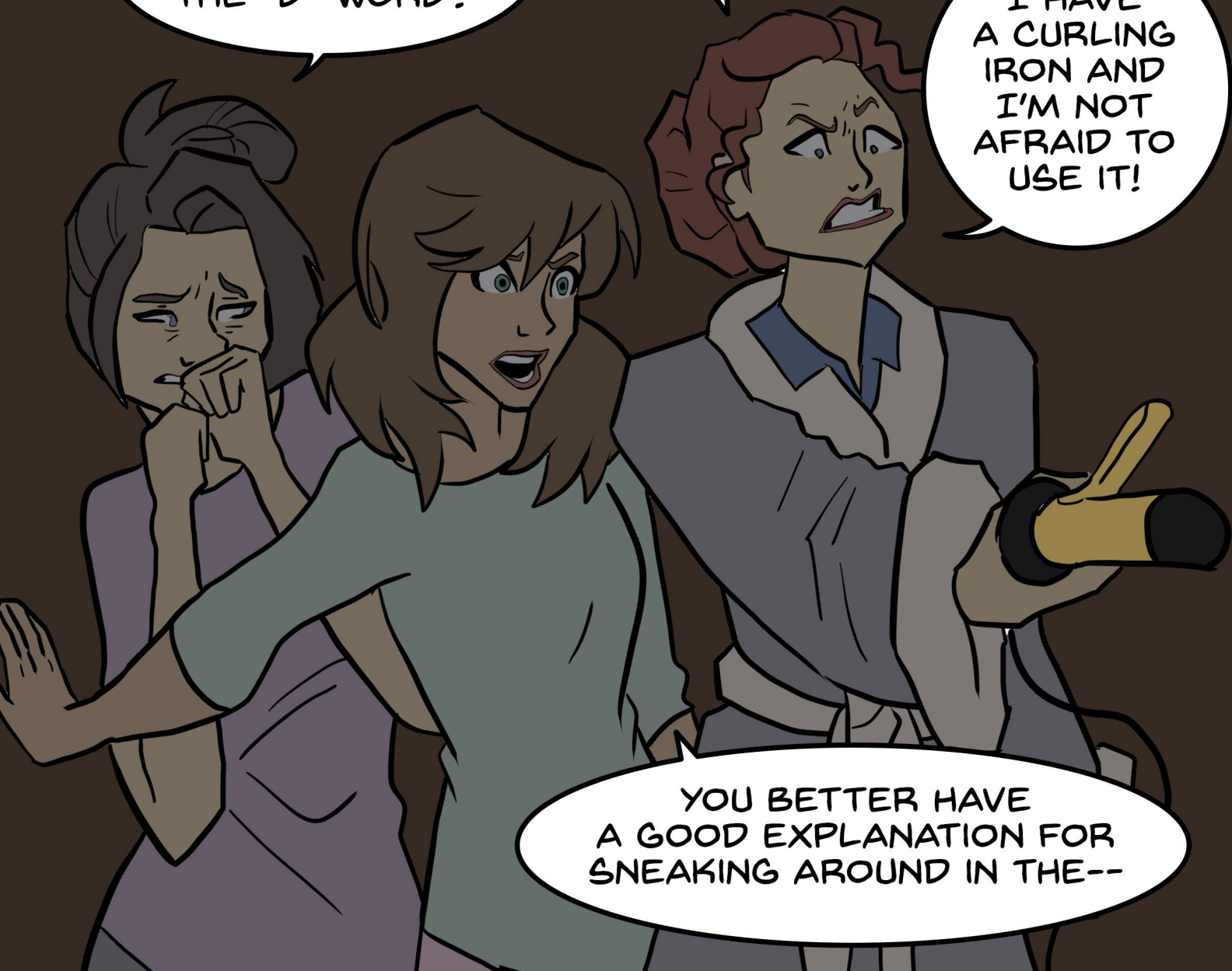
A DEAD END!

COULD
WE **NOT** USE
THE "D" WORD?

ALRIGHT
WHOMEVER YOU
ARE, THERE'S
NOWHERE ELSE
TO RUN.

I HAVE
A CURLING
IRON AND
I'M NOT
AFRAID TO
USE IT!

YOU BETTER HAVE
A GOOD EXPLANATION FOR
SNEAKING AROUND IN THE--



--WALLS?

IT'S--
IT'S A LITTLE
GIRL!



ALRIGHT, LITTLE
LASSIE, JUST WHAT
ARE YOU UP TO
BACK HERE?

YEAH, ARE
YOU THE ONE
WHO WENT IN
OUR ROOM?

I--- I---

GUYS,
YOU'RE
SCARING
HER.

WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?

HER NAME
IS **TIA**...



A comic panel with a dark brown background. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair tied in a bun is seen from the back, wearing a purple shirt. In the middle ground, a young man with brown hair and a grey robe is on the left, looking surprised with his mouth open. In the center, an older man with a shaved head and a blue robe with a grey sash looks on with a serious expression. To his right, another older man with grey hair and a mustache, wearing a red and yellow robe, looks on. Three speech bubbles are present: one from the young man, one from the man in the blue robe, and one from the woman in the foreground.

SHE'S MY
GRANDDAUGHTER.

GRANDDAUGHTER?

WHAT
EXACTLY IS
GOING ON
HERE?



OKAY, SO **WHY** WAS YOUR GRANDDAUGHTER SNEAKING AROUND IN THE WALLS?

WHY DO YOU HAVE CLIPPINGS ABOUT A BANK ROBBERY--

AND PICTURES OF THAT **SAME** HOSTAGE HUNG ON THE WALLS--

AND HER **RING** IN YOUR SAFE?

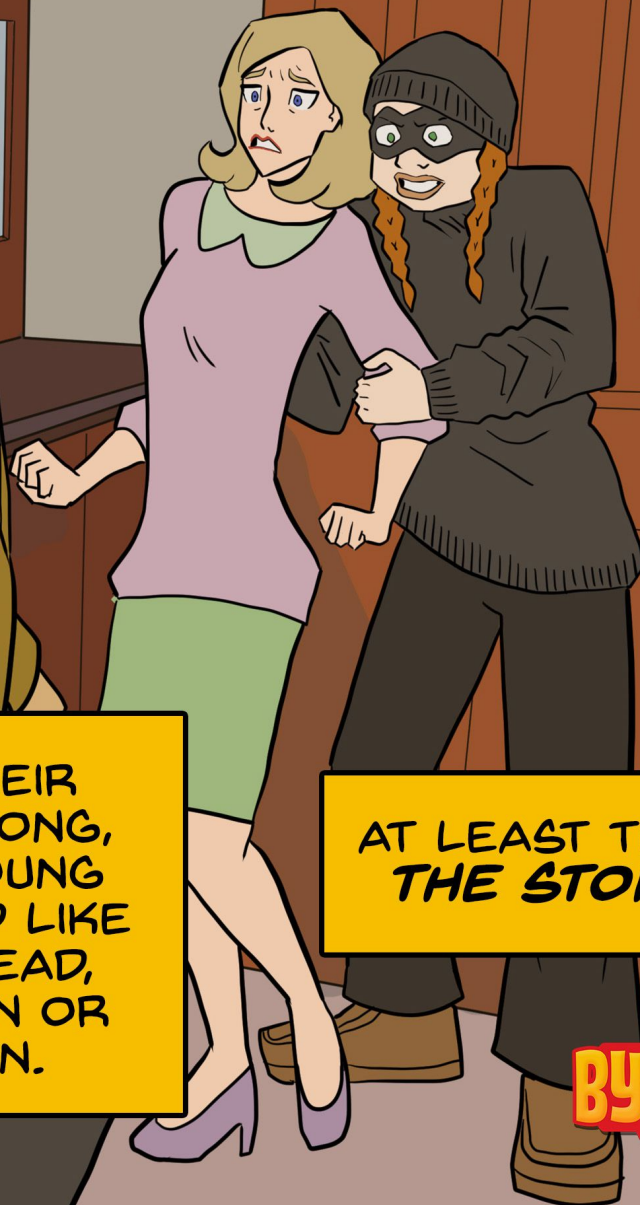
AHEM.
IN HIS **SAFE**?

AND YOU GOT INTO IT... **HOW**?

HEH HEH...
I CAN
EXPLAIN...

FIRST,
WHY DON'T **I**
EXPLAIN...

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG MAN, TWO BANK ROBBERERS TERRORIZED THE AREA. THEY WERE LIKE OUR OWN LOCAL BONNIE AND CLYDE.



ONE DAY, ONE OF THEIR ROBBERIES WENT WRONG, AND THEY TOOK A YOUNG WOMAN HOSTAGE, AND LIKE YOU'VE PROBABLY READ, SHE WAS NEVER SEEN OR HEARD FROM AGAIN.

AT LEAST THAT'S
THE STORY...

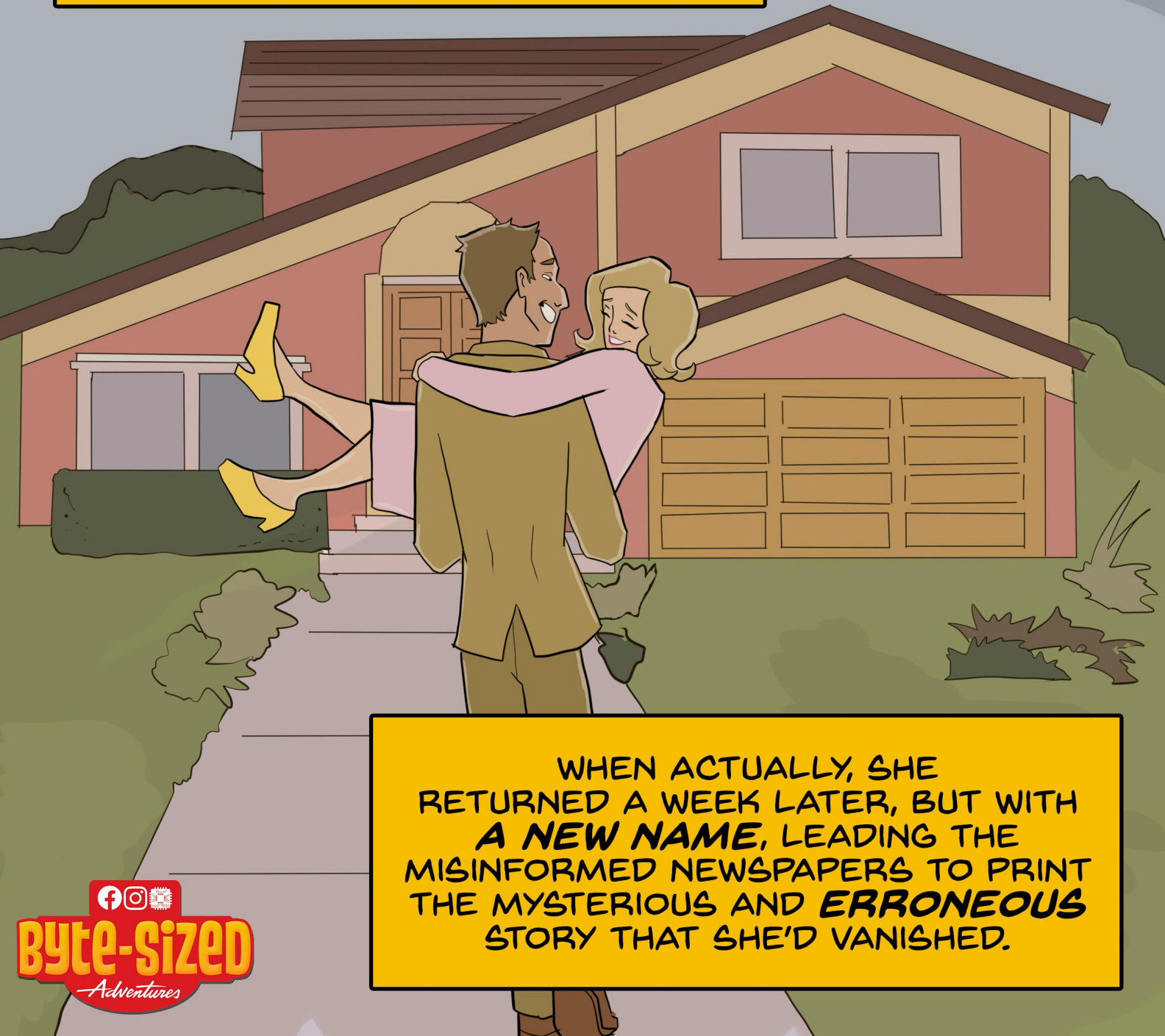


Byte-sized
Adventures

IN REALITY, HOWEVER, THE TWO BANK ROBBERS
LET THE GIRL GO A FEW MILES DOWN THE ROAD.

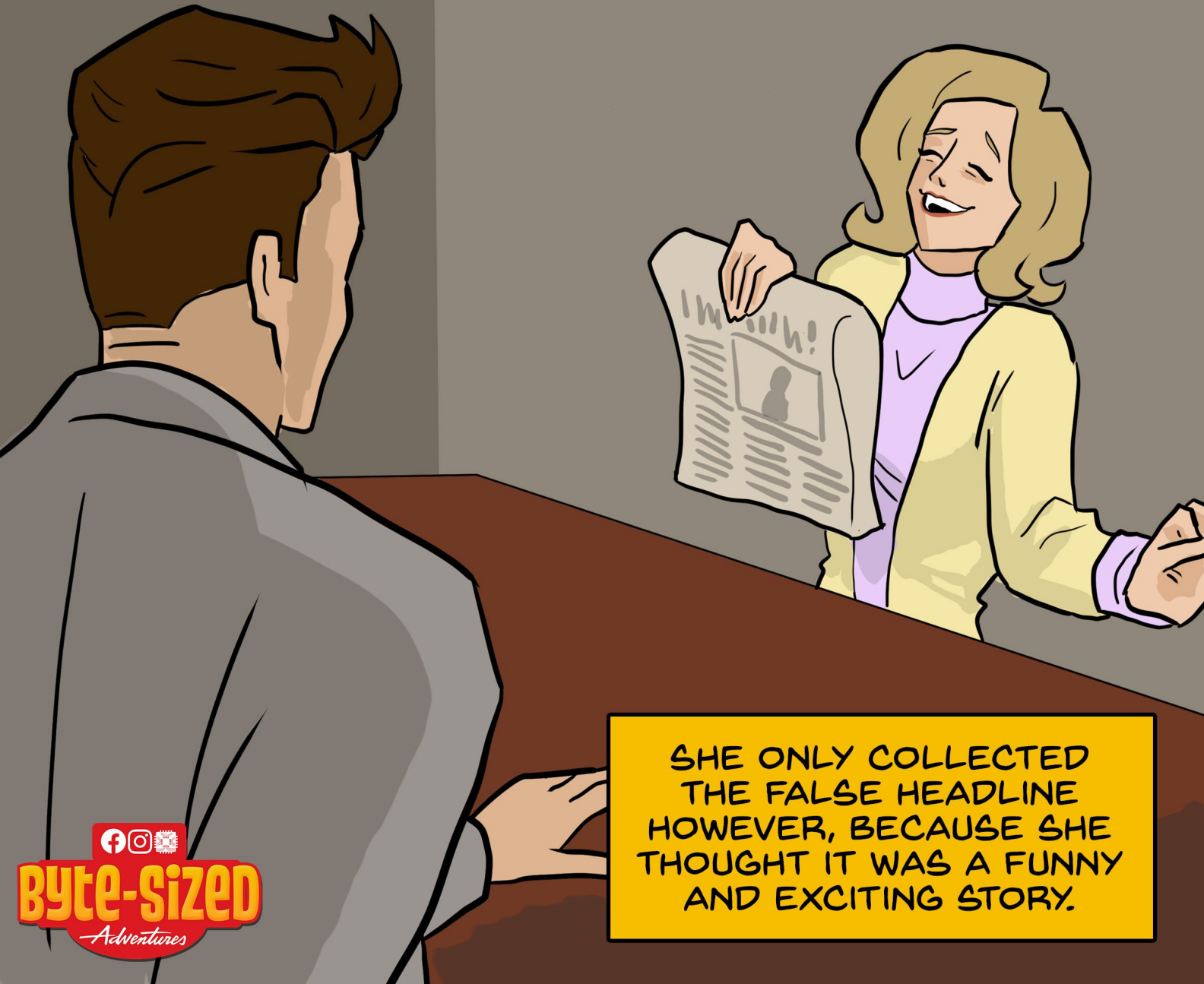
NOW IT JUST SO HAPPENED,
THAT THE VERY NEXT DAY
WAS THE GIRL'S WEDDING
DAY, WHICH WAS TAKING
PLACE *IN THE NEXT
TOWN OVER.*

SO SHE **SEEMED** TO "DISAPPEAR,"



WHEN ACTUALLY, SHE
RETURNED A WEEK LATER, BUT WITH
A NEW NAME, LEADING THE
MISINFORMED NEWSPAPERS TO PRINT
THE MYSTERIOUS AND **ERRONEOUS**
STORY THAT SHE'D VANISHED.

AFTER SHE RETURNED FROM THE HONEYMOON AND SAW THE PAPERS, SHE WENT AND CORRECTED THE MISTAKE AND THE PAPER PRINTED A RETRACTION.



SHE ONLY COLLECTED THE FALSE HEADLINE HOWEVER, BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT IT WAS A FUNNY AND EXCITING STORY.

SHE AND HER HUSBAND WENT ON TO OPEN A HOTEL THAT WAS A HOT SPOT IN ITS HEYDAY, BUT HAS FALLEN INTO OBSCURITY AND DISREPAIR IN MODERN TIMES.



IF YOU HAVEN'T GUESSED IT, THAT GIRL WAS **MY WIFE**. WHICH IS WHY I HAVE HER PORTRAIT AND WEDDING RING.



A comic panel with a dark blue background. On the left, a bald man with a grey beard and a blue robe with a grey sash stands with his hands on his hips, looking towards the right. In the center, a young girl with blonde hair and a purple shirt looks up at the man with a worried expression. On the right, a woman with brown hair, wearing a purple shirt and green pants, holds a white mug in her right hand and a cardboard box in her left. She is looking at the man. There are five speech bubbles containing text.

SHE'S PASSED ON NOW, SO IT'S JUST MY GRANDDAUGHTER TIA AND ME.

HAYLEE WAS THE ONE WHO KNEW ABOUT RUNNIN' A BUSINESS. I'M AFRAID I'M NOT SO TALENTED AT THAT SORT OF THING.

SEE, TIA DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM, I FIGURE SHE TOOK IT UPON HERSELF TA HELP ME OUT.

AM I RIGHT?

YES, SIR.

BY SPYING ON US AND COMING INTO OUR ROOM?

I-- I
USED THE OLD
SERVANTS
PASSAGES.

I WANTED
TO MAKE SURE
OUR GUESTS WERE
HAPPY...

YOU KNOW, HAVE
THINGS APPEAR IN
THEIR ROOMS BEFORE
THEY EVEN ASK
FOR IT...

THEY'D THINK
IT WAS NEAT,
AND TELL THEIR
FRIENDS...

AND
MAYBE WE'D
GET MORE
BUSINESS.

IT'S A
THOUGHTFUL
NOTION, TIA.
BUT...

BUT YOU
DIDN'T TELL
ME ABOUT
IT,

AND YOU
SNUCK OUTTA
OUR APARTMENT
WITHOUT
PERMISSION.

AND THEN...
YOU SNUCK INTO
OUR **PRIVATE**
ROOMS.

AND YOU
SCARED US!
DON'T FORGET
THAT!

AM I
GONNA GO
TO JAIL?

NO, NO...
OF COURSE
NOT.

FOR **ALL**
OF US.

LET'S JUST
TAKE THIS AS
A LEARNING
EXPERIENCE.

EVERYONE'S
IMAGINATIONS GOT
A LITTLE TOO
CARRIED AWAY
TONIGHT.

YEAH,
CARRIED AWAY INTO OUR
ROOMS WHILE WE
SLEPT.

OH, AND WHAT
ABOUT LETTING
SCARY MOVIES
INFLUENCE YOUR
THINKING?

AND JUMPING TO
CONCLUSIONS WITHOUT
ALL THE FACTS,
EH, JULES?

AYE, AND I LET MY
FEAR AND SUSPICION
GET THE BEST O' ME.

AND I SHOULD HAVE
BEEN A LITTLE MORE
ASSERTIVE IN KEEPING
EVERYONE CALM.

AND *YOU*, WHIT?

WHAT DID
WHIT DO?

YOU NEED
TO CHECK THE
ENGINE BEFORE
LONG CAR
TRIPS.

YOU **GOT**
ME THERE.

Hotel Who Done It – Prose Version

On a secluded highway on a dark and stormy night, Whit, accompanied by Connie, Jules, and Renee, navigates his car back to Odyssey from a distant location. The rain pours relentlessly, as Whit remarks with a whistle, acknowledging the intensity of the storm.

"It's really coming down, isn't it!" He says.

Inside Whit's Car, all the passengers are visible. Renee smirks at Whit's joke.

"I'm glad the weather held off while we were at Cedar Point," Jules says.

"Aye, 2 full days of sunshine. Couldn't have ridden any of the rollercoasters in a storm," Renee responds.

"Thanks again for taking us, Whit," Connie expresses her gratitude.

"It's the least I could do for my favorite employees," Whit chuckles.

"We're your only employees," Renee points out with a playful tone.

Suddenly, the car's engine starts to smoke!

"Uh oh! That doesn't look good!" Connie says

The smoking car veers off from the highway onto a side road. "I'd better turn off here..." says Whit. A few miles down the deserted road, as lightning flashes, they discover themselves on the grounds of an old hotel, a once-grand establishment now weathered by time and neglect.

"Spooky..." says Jules.

The rain outside has escalated into a heavy downpour.

"Hmmm... no service. Any of you have reception?" Whit asks.

"Nope," the girls reply.

"Well, I don't have any tools with me, and we can't sit here all night. They should have a phone inside," Whit suggests.

The girls are hesitant to enter the building, particularly Jules, who seems a bit apprehensive compared to the others.

"Um... Mr. Whittaker, this place is kinda givin' me the creeps," Jules voices her unease.

"It's... just the weather. Makes everything seem scarier than it is," Renee reassured, attempting to alleviate the tension.

"Well, you can wait here for me if you want," Whit offers, providing Jules with an option.

Entering the lobby, the four of them wring themselves out, soaked from the rain.

"Ugh. Twenty feet from the car to the porch and I'm soaked!" Connie complains.

"Same," Renee agrees.

"I'm telling you guys, I've seen a bunch of scary movies that start out just like this," Jules remarks.

"Sorry, we don't have movies here..." A mysterious voice says from down the hall.

"Or televisions for that matter. It's an old hotel, but I assure you we have every other consideration for your comfort," Mr. Havisham says, stepping closer to the group, his smile appearing a little too exuberant, which comes across as slightly creepy.

The girls whisper to each other in the foreground while Whit and the concierge talk in the background.

"Creepy butler! This is a movie!" Jules whispers to the others.

"He's the concierge, Jules. But..." Connie whispers back,

"But yeah... I've seen more pleasant smiles on skeletons..." Renee adds quietly, expressing her discomfort.

Whit addresses Mr. Havisham. "Hello. I wonder if we could use your phone. Our car's broken down and we don't have cell reception,"

"But of course. The telephone is right this way..." Mr. Havisham responds, a little too courteously.

Minutes later, Whit hangs up the old fashioned phone and sighs, expressing his apology to the girls.

"I'm sorry, girls. They can't send someone out until the morning because of the storm. Looks like we'll need to stay the night," he informs them.

"Splendid. I can check you in right over here," Mr. Havisham responds, his tone seemingly overly enthusiastic.

"Yeah... splendid..." Jules mutters, her tone reflecting a hint of sarcasm or skepticism. Whit and his crew are escorted to their rooms by the concierge. As they navigate through the dimly lit halls, Renee's attention is drawn to a large, unsettling painting of a young woman. Amidst the eerie atmosphere, the concierge maintains his unsettling demeanor, adding to the sense of unease among the women.

"Right this way." Mr. Havisham says, leading the way and addressing the guests. "I've set you up in two of our finest rooms. It's been quite a while since we've had guests. But we keep the rooms fresh and clean. You know... just in case..."

They finally arrive at their designated rooms. Whit occupies one room, while across the hall, the three girls share another.

"Thank you again for your hospitality," Whit expresses his gratitude. "Yeah, uh, thanks," Connie responds, somewhat awkwardly.

"My absolute pleasure." Mr. Havisham assures them. "We hope you have a pleasant night's slumber,"

In their room, the girls begin to settle in for the night. They all have changed into their pajamas, preparing for bed.

"You guys seriously think you'll be able to sleep in this place?" Jules questions the group.

"That remains to be seen," Renee responds, uncertain.

"Come on guys, it's just an old hotel. We'll be totally... fine..." Connie tries to reassure them, but her confidence wavers.

While they're getting ready, Connie becomes distracted by something she sees in the small storage closet.

"What is it?" Jules asks, noticing something.

Connie comes across a framed newspaper in the room. The newspaper recounts the details of a bank robbery and a hostage situation.

"Well, that's a weird choice for wall art," Jules remarks.

"This is a local paper. It must've happened around here," Connie observes.

"Why would they frame an article about a bank robbery?" Renee questions.

"Bank robbing duo terrorizes area. Young woman disappears after being taken hostage in robbery gone wrong," Connie reads aloud from the framed newspaper article.

"Is it just me or does the mugshot of that bank robber look like a young version of..." Jules begins, trailing off.

Connie questions, "You think the Concierge is the bank robber?"

Jules excitedly interjects, "See! You knew what I was gonna say! You think so too!"

Connie denies, "I didn't say that!"

Renee adds, "But look at the photo of the girl who went missing..."

Connie inquires, "What about it?"

Renee explains, "She looks just like the girl in a painting I saw down the hall..."

Jules expresses, "Okay guys, I've got goosebumps the size of marbles."

Connie ponders, "So you think the concierge downstairs is a former bank robber who made the girl in the painting disappear?"

Renee points out, "He kept this newspaper for a reason, and that painting is the spittin' image of the girl from the article."

Jules suggests, "Guys, what if this is where he like... held her captive?"

Connie cautions, "Both of you are jumping to way too many conclusions."

"Creak..." a sound resonates through the room seemingly coming from nowhere, causing all of them to spin their heads around to look behind them. Despite their quick reactions, there is nothing to be seen.

In mere moments, the three girls stand in Whit's doorway, each of them urgently explaining the situation to him. Whit, dressed in a robe and pajamas, listens intently to their words, his expression

"AH!!!" Connie screams in surprise at the sudden knocking on the door.

"Connie? It's Whit! I heard screams, are you three alright?" Whit's voice comes from behind the door.

Seconds later, Whit is now in the room looking at the mirror and cookies.

"It looks like something strange is going on here. I have the same things in my room," Whit observes.

"This is beyond strange, Mr. Whittaker— this is straight up evil haunted house stuff," Jules remarks, her tone filled with unease.

"I doubt the forces of evil are in the habit of leaving cookies behind," Whit counters, injecting a touch of logic and levity into the situation.

"That still doesn't explain how the cookies got there!" Jules insists.

Whit acknowledges her point. "No... it doesn't."

Jules furrows her brow, troubled. "I barricaded the door! There's no way anyone could've gotten in!"

Renee chimes in, adding to the discussion. "Plus, I think there's only the one employee..."

Jules nods in agreement. "You mean the former bank robber?"

Whit interjects, cautious. "You don't know that."

Connie questions, "Was the Barricade still in the same spot when you let Whit in?"

Renee ponders, "Are you suggesting they moved the barricade?"

Jules interjects, "What about the deadbolt?"

Renee offers an observation, "I wouldn't think a man his age could force open a deadbolted door..."

Whit clears his throat, prompting attention.

Renee continues sheepishly, "...though I wouldn't want to assume."

Whit proposes, "There's a simple solution to this."

Jules eagerly asks, "What's that?"

"We go downstairs right now, and ask him about it," Whit suggests decisively.

In the dimly lit lobby of the hotel, the front desk sits unmanned.

"There's no one here..." Connie observes, scanning the deserted lobby.

Renee remarks, "Typically a concierge stays up all night and mans the desk..."

Whit reflects, "Hmmm, well if it is just him running the establishment, he may have gone to sleep.

We frail old men need our rest, you know."

"Sorry" Renee apologizes, recognizing Whit's humorous jab.

"Alright girls, I can't explain the cookies or writing in our rooms, but it's the middle of the night and we have nowhere to go. Let's all head back upstairs," Whit suggests, addressing the group.

"But—" Jules starts to protest.

"I'll be more than happy to leave my door open and keep watch if you like," Whit offers as a reassurance.

"That's okay, Mr. Whittaker. We'll be alright," Renee assures him, declining his offer.

"We will!?" Jules questions.

"We will," Renee confirms, projecting confidence.

In their hotel room, Jules voices her unease. "I am way too creeped out to go to sleep! This is just like a horror movie. We're gonna wake up with no big toes.

"Renee shares her resolve, "I'm not even planning to sleep."

Connie questions, surprised, "You're staying up? I thought you said we'd be fine."

"We will be, because I'm going to figure out what's going on," Renee asserts confidently.

"Now we're making sense!" Jules exclaims, relieved to have a plan in place.

In their discussion, Connie nervously suggests, "I really think we should stay in our room. Together. All three of us."

Jules offers, "If you don't want to be alone, Connie, just come with us."

"What do you guys think you're going to find anyway?" Connie questions skeptically.

"An explanation," Renee asserts confidently.

"Yeah! Of exactly how and why the ghost of that hostage girl is back for revenge on her bank-robbing kidnapper," Jules adds with dramatic flair.

"A ghost, Jules? Really?" Connie responds, doubtful.

"Do you have a better explanation?" Jules challenges.

Renee suggests decisively, "I say we go find that better explanation."

In the dimly lit, deserted hotel lobby, Renee illuminates their path with her phone flashlight while Jules hops behind the front desk counter.

"Okay, let's see what this guy's up to!" Jules declares, her curiosity piqued.

"Jules! Get out from behind the counter!" Connie admonishes, concerned about breaking rules.

"I'm with Connie. We can find an answer without breaking the law," Renee agrees, urging caution.

"What law? There's no sign saying not to come back here, and I'm not opening the cash register," Jules counters, defending her actions.

"There might be confidential documents or something back there," Connie suggests, expressing her worry about potential consequences.

Excitedly, Jules removes the painting from the wall behind the counter, revealing a safe hidden behind it.

"Guys, check it out!" Jules exclaims, gesturing towards the safe.

"The ol' safe behind a painting trick. Classic," Renee remarks with a hint of amusement.

"Whit's got one of these in his office," Connie adds.

"If I was hiding something valuable, (like evidence of my crimes!) I'd put it in here," Jules speculates, considering the possibilities.

"Well, I'm pretty sure breaking into a safe is, in fact, illegal. So I'll say it again, get out from behind the counter," Connie insists, emphasizing the importance of following the law.

As Jules explores, she finds that the safe has been left open. "Ah, but is it 'breaking in' if it's already open?" Jules questions, contemplating the situation.

"It's not your safe!" Connie exclaims, concerned about Jules' actions.

"I'm not taking anything, I'm just looking!" Jules defends herself, trying to justify her curiosity.

"Jules, get away from that safe right—" Connie starts to say, her voice filled with urgency.

Jules opens the safe, revealing documents, a small sum of money, and a diamond engagement ring. Jules leans in, her head nearly filling the frame as she gazes into the safe. Renee stands nearby, trying to catch a glimpse.

"Is that a ring?" Jules asks, her curiosity piqued.

Peering into the safe with her phone light, Renee illuminates the contents, while all three of them appear visibly spooked.

"It's engraved with the same name as the girl who disappeared!" Renee exclaims, pointing out a detail that adds to their unease.

"Okay... that's a little..." Connie begins, searching for words to articulate her feelings.

"Freaky is what it is!" Jules interjects, expressing her fear.

"Okay, yeah I admit it, that's the right word," Connie agrees reluctantly, acknowledging the unsettling nature of the discovery.

"Yes, yes, yes. I think it's time to go," Renee concurs, suggesting they leave the area.

As they move away from the desk and through the lobby, Jules voices her urgent concern.

"We need to wake up Mr. Whittaker and call the cops! The concierge is a bank robber and hostage taker!" Jules exclaims, her anxiety evident.

"We don't have enough evidence to trouble the police or Whit," Renee counters, trying to maintain a level-headed approach.

"What are you talking about!?" Jules responds, incredulous at Renee's reluctance.

"Renee's right. Everything we found is strange, but none of it proves anything. And I want solid proof before I have to admit to Whit that I just stood there while you opened someone else's safe," Connie explains, echoing Renee's sentiment.

A noise interrupts their conversation, seemingly originating from nowhere. All three of them swiftly turn their heads to look behind them, but find nothing there.

"It's that same noise again!" Renee exclaims, recognizing the sound.

"It came from over there!" Connie points out, trying to locate the source of the noise.

The three of them inspect a lobby wall closely.

"Didn't it sound like it was coming from this wall?" Renee questions, her attention focused on the wall.

"Yeah, from inside it!" Jules confirms, agreeing with Renee's observation.

"Okay, that's enough, let's head back—" Connie suggests, starting to turn away.

"Look, a loose panel!" Renee interrupts excitedly, pointing out the discovery.

As the secret wall panel slides open, it reveals a servant's staircase hidden behind it.

"A secret passage!" Renee exclaims with excitement, intrigued by the discovery.

"A dark one..." Jules remarks nervously, her apprehension evident.

"Whit has one of these too..." Connie adds.

"We're going in," Renee declares with determination, ready to explore the hidden passage.

Navigating through the dim secret passage, Renee observes, "It looks like there's a door up ahead,"

"It's our room!" Connie exclaims opening the door.

Jules concludes, "So someone did sneak into our room!"

"Right. Someone. Not a ghost," Renee confirms, dismissing the supernatural explanation.

"That is not okay!" Connie interjects, expressing her concern.

"But why would someone sneak into our room to leave cookies?" Renee wonders aloud.

"Is this that concierge's weird idea of hospitality?" Jules suggests.

"There's no way someone in their right mind would think it's okay to sneak into a guest's room while they slept!" Connie asserts.

"Perhaps he's not in his right mind?" Renee proposes.

"And none of this explains the newspaper, the painting, or the ring, which all point to that girl from the bank robbery hostage thing!" Jules adds.

They hear the same noise again, this time coming from behind them inside the secret passage.

Reacting quickly, Renee grabs her curling iron, ready to defend herself if necessary.

"AAAHH!" Jules screams in surprise.

"It's that noise again!" Connie exclaims.

"But this time we know where it's comin' from! Come on!" Renee urges, determined to confront whatever is causing the disturbance.

As they navigate through the secret passages, they chase after a small, unidentified figure, their footsteps echoing in the confined space.

"There's somethin' movin' up ahead! Keep going!" Renee encourages, urging them to continue the pursuit.

"There's definitely something running from us!" Connie confirms.

"A dead end!" Renee announces..

"Could we not use the 'D' word?" Jules quips nervously, trying to lighten the tense atmosphere.

"Alright whoever you are, there's nowhere else to run," Connie declares firmly, addressing the unseen figure.

"I have a curling iron and I'm not afraid to use it," Renee adds, brandishing her makeshift weapon.

"You better have a good explanation for sneaking around in the walls" Connie begins, But is caught by surprise when they finally realize who the mysterious figure is—

"It's— it's a little girl!" Jules exclaims!

"Alright, little lassie, just what are you up to back here?" Renee questions, her tone firm.

"Yeah, are you the one who went in our room?" Jules adds, her voice tinged with suspicion.

"I— I—" the girl stammers, seemingly caught off guard by their inquiries.

"Guys, you're scaring her. What's your name?" Connie intervenes, trying to ease the tension.

"Her name's Tia—" a voice interrupts from behind them.

Stepping out from the shadows behind them are Whit and the Concierge. They intervene to defuse the tension, and the concierge offers to provide an explanation.

"He's my granddaughter," the Concierge reveals.

"Granddaughter?" Jules repeats, surprised by the revelation.

"What exactly is going on here?" Renee questions.

Within moments, everyone settles in the drawing room, with hot chocolate served and eager to hear the explanation.

"Yeah, what is going on? Why was this kid sneaking around in the walls? Why do you have clippings about a bank robbery—" Jules begins, bombarding the concierge with questions.

"—and pictures of that same hostage in the walls—" Renee adds, pointing out another perplexing detail.

"And her ring in your safe?" Jules finishes, voicing her confusion.

"Ahem. In his safe? And you got into it... how?" Whit interjects.

"Heh heh... I can explain..." Jules responds sheepishly.

"First, why don't I explain..." the Concierge suggests, taking control of the conversation.

"When I was a young man, two bank robbers terrorized the area. They were like our own local Bonnie and Clyde. One day, one of their robberies went wrong, and they took a young woman hostage, and like you've probably read, she was never seen or heard from again. At least that's the story.

In a flashback, two bank robbers seize a young woman, the same one depicted in the earlier painting, as they escape from a bank robbery.

On a country road, the girl walks towards the camera, brushing dust off her sleeves. In the background, the bank robbers drive away into the distance.

"In reality, however," the concierge continues, "the two bank robbers let the girl go a few miles down the road. Now it just so happened, that the very next day was the girl's wedding day, which was taking place in the next town over."

Continuing in the flashback, the new husband, carries the young woman from their motorcar toward the threshold of their new house.

"So she seemed to 'disappear', but then returned a week later with a new name, leading the misinformed newspapers to print the mysterious and exaggerated story that she'd vanished," the Concierge narrates.

Continuing in the flashback, at the newspaper office, she holds up the headline and she and the editor share a good-natured laugh.

The Concierge narrates. "After she returned from her honeymoon and saw the papers, she went and corrected the mistake and the paper printed a retraction. She only collected the false headline however, because she thought it was a funny and exciting story,"

Continuing in the flashback, the hotel they're currently staying in is depicted, only now it's new and bustling with guests.

"She and her husband went on to open a hotel that was a hot spot in its heyday, but has fallen into obscurity and disrepair in modern times. If you haven't guessed it, that girl was my wife. Which is why I have her portrait and wedding ring," the Concierge narrates, revealing the connection between the girl in the story and himself.

"She's passed on now, so it's just my granddaughter Tia and me. Haylee was the one who knew about running a business. I'm afraid I'm not so talented at that sort of thing. See, Tia didn't mean no harm, I figure she took it upon herself to help me out. Am I right?" the Concierge explains, sharing insights into their family dynamic.

"Yes, sir," Tia confirms, acknowledging her grandfather's explanation.

"By spying on us and coming into our room?" Jules questions, seeking clarification.

"I— I used the old servants' passages." Tia continues, "I wanted to make sure our guests were happy... you know, have things appear in their rooms before they even ask for it... they'd think it was neat, and tell their friends... and maybe we'd get more business."

"It's a thoughtful notion, Tia. But..." Whit begins, acknowledging Tia's intentions.

"First off, you didn't tell me about it, and you snuck outta our apartment without permission," her grandfather points out.

"And then you snuck into our private rooms," Connie adds.

"And you scared us! Don't forget that!" Jules chimes in.

"Am I gonna go to jail?" Tia asks anxiously, her voice tinged with worry.

"No, no... of course not," Whit reassures her, trying to calm her fears.

"Let's just take this as a learning experience," the Concierge suggests, aiming to provide some perspective on the situation.

"For all of us. Everyone's imaginations got a little too carried away tonight," Whit acknowledges, recognizing the collective overreaction.

"Yeah, carried away into our rooms while we slept," Jules retorts, still unsettled by the events.

"Oh, and what about letting scary movies influence your thinking? And jumping to conclusions without all the facts, eh, Jules?" Whit adds.

"Aye, and I let my fear and suspicion get the best of me," Renee admits, reflecting on her actions.

"And I should have been a little more assertive in keeping everyone calm," Connie acknowledges, recognizing her own role in the situation.

"And you, Whit?" Jules inquires, curious about Whit's perspective.

"What did Whit do?" Connie questions.

"You need to check the engine before long car trips," Jules remarks, a playful tease directed at Whit. Laughter fills the room as the tension eases.

"You got me there," Whit concedes with a good-natured chuckle.

The End.